

Introduced by Senator Wolk

February 26, 2015

An act to add Section 116325.5 to the Health and Safety Code, relating to water.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 552, as introduced, Wolk. Public water systems: disadvantaged communities: drinking water standards.

Existing law, the California Safe Drinking Water Act, requires the State Water Resources Control Board to administer provisions relating to the regulation of drinking water to protect public health, including, but not limited to, conducting research, studies, and demonstration programs relating to the provision of a dependable, safe supply of drinking water, enforcing the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, adoption of enforcement regulations, and conducting studies and investigations to assess the quality of water in domestic water supplies. Existing law requires the state board to ensure that all public water systems are operated in compliance with the act.

This bill would require, by January 1, 2017, the state board to develop a plan, including enforcement mechanisms, to ensure that disadvantaged communities have water systems that are in compliance with state and federal drinking water standards. The bill would require the plan to identify strategies to help bring disadvantaged communities into compliance with safe drinking water standards.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
2 following:

3 (a) An estimated 500 public water systems in disadvantaged
4 communities rely on, and have to pay high rates for, sources of
5 drinking water that do not meet state and federal safe drinking
6 water standards.

7 (b) Although funding sources are available to assist
8 disadvantaged communities with needed capital improvements,
9 these communities often lack governance infrastructure, technical
10 expertise, and the ability to pay for the ongoing operations and
11 maintenance costs necessary to continue to meet the state and
12 federal drinking water standards.

13 SEC. 2. Section 116325.5 is added to the Health and Safety
14 Code, to read:

15 116325.5. (a) On or before January 1, 2017, the State Water
16 Resources Control Board shall develop a plan, including
17 enforcement mechanisms, to ensure that disadvantaged
18 communities have water systems that are in compliance with state
19 and federal drinking water standards.

20 (b) The plan shall identify strategies to help bring the
21 disadvantaged communities into compliance with safe drinking
22 water standards, including the following:

- 23 (1) Improved, effective governance structure.
24 (2) Access to technical assistance.
25 (3) Implementation of capital improvements.
26 (4) Sources of revenue to fund ongoing operations and
27 maintenance costs.